



## State of Connecticut

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

#### OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

30 TRINITY STREET  
FOURTH FLOOR  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

#### CHRISTINE PERRA RAPILLO

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER  
DIRECTOR OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY DEFENSE  
(860) 509-6472 TELEPHONE  
(860) 509-6495 FAX

Testimony of Christine Perra Rapillo  
Executive Assistant Public Defender  
Office of Chief Public Defender

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN  
FEBRUARY 3, 2011

#### RAISED BILL NO. 846

#### AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF EDUCATIONAL CREDITS

The Office of the Chief Public Defender supports passage of **Raised Bill No. 846, An Act Concerning the Transfer of Educational Credits**. This bill requires timely provision of educational records to the receiving school when a child transfers from one district to another and ensures that all children receive credit for work done at prior schools. This proposal will add a requirement that children committed to a facility run by the Department of Children and Families will receive full credit for school work done while attending Unified School District #2, which is the public school district that encompasses all DCF facilities. Similar language is contained in **Proposed Bill No. 423, An Act Concerning Educating and Juvenile Reentry**. The Office of Chief Public Defender believes that adoption of this language is essential to ensure that children who reenter school from a DCF facility are given the best chance of succeeding.

*Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220h, Transfer of student records*, already requires school districts to grant credit for work done while a student is enrolled in Unified School District #1, which includes all Department of Corrections facilities. This must be expanded to give the same credit to children when returning home from a commitment to DCF. The State of Connecticut spends thousands of dollars educating children who are placed at DCF facilities and thus attending schools run by Unified School District #2. Credit transfer for work done in these facilities should be mandatory and automatic. Children returning from DCF facility should clearly be accorded the same educational rights as youth reentering the community from the Department of Corrections.

Select Committee on Children  
February 3, 2011  
Testimony of Christine Rapillo  
Page 2

Children coming back into the community from a DCF placement have a difficult time reenrolling in school. They are often denied credit for course work done at the Connecticut Children's Place, Riverview Hospital or the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS). These children are often able to advance grades while attending school in a facility. For example, the average child committed to CJTS **gains a full year of academic progress in reading and math** while committed to the facility. They should be given credit for that work when they return to the local public school. School achievement is one of the best indicators of future success when returning to the community from placement. A child who makes progress while out of the home should be given credit for that work in order to maximize the changes that the child remains in school and graduates, providing the child

The Office of the Chief Public Defender urges passage of this bill and thanks the committee for raising this important issue.